

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 TRSE-00 /057 W
-----032930 232209Z /14

O R 232100Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5095
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3468

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPER, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: WATERGATE ON THE OZAMA

1. THIS REPORT SUMMARIZED THE BIZARRE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK THAT HAVE RESULTED FROM THE GOVERNING PARTIDO REFORMISTA'S ATTEMPTS TO LEGALLY CHALLENGE THE RESULTS, STILL UNOFFICIAL, OF THE MAY 16 ELECTION.

2. FIRST, THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE), WHICH UNDER THE ELECTORAL LAW MUST FORMALLY DECLARE THE WINNERS (THE DECISION SHOULD HAVE COME BY JUNE 16 OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE), IS STILL PONDERING THE MATTER. AS OF JUNE 22 THE BOARD HAD RECEIVED THE BALANCE OF THE 44 MUNICIPAL VOTE COUNTS CHALLENGED BY THE REFORMISTAS, BUT IT STILL HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION OF HOW IT INTENDS TO ACT.

3. THE JCE ALSO IS UNDER PRESSURE TO EXPLAIN ITSELF IN THE STRANGE AFFAIR OF THE TWO CHILEAN COMPUTER EXPERTS WHO WERE QUIETLY BROUGHT INTO THE COUNTRY LAST WEEK TO DETERMINE IF, AS THE REFORMISTAS CHARGE, THE JCE'S VOTER REGISTRATION COMPUTERS

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WERE JIMMEYED IN FAVOR OF THE VICTORIOUS PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO (PRD) TO DISENFRANCHISE 600,000 ELIGIBLE VOTERS PRIOR TO LAST MONTH'S ELECTION. "INFORMED SOURCE" REPORTS APPEARING IN SEVERAL PAPERS, AND NOT AUTHORITATIVELY DENIED BY ANYONE, SAY THE CHILEANS FOUND NOTHING AMISS IN THE COMPUTER PRINTOUTS OF REGISTERED VOTERS, AND HAD SO INFORMED INTERIM JCE PRESIDENT VARGAS SUBVERI. "SUBERI," AS HE IS NOW UNIVERSALLY KNOWN, HAS REFUSED TO SPEAK

TO THE QUESTION, AND HIS TOP ASSISTANTS ARE ALSO KEEPING MUM. OTHER OFFICIALS OF THE JCE, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT BEEN QUIET; LISTIN DIARIO TODAY CARRIES AN INTERVIEW WITH TWO JCE EMPLOYEES WHO CLAIM THEY HAD CUSTODY OF SOME OF THE KEY MATERIAL IN THE CASE, AND THEY OFFER THE OPINION THAT IT WAS NOT RPT NOT POSSIBLE TO TAMPER WITH THE LISTS.

4. WHILE THE EMBARRASSED OFFICIAL SILENCE PERSISTS, THE STRANGE INTERLUDE HERE OF JUAN RICARDO GIADACH AND MARTIN BORACK CAME TO AN ABRUPT END LAST EVENING. THE TWO SO-CALLED COMPUTER EXPERTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE LITERALLY FLED THE COUNTRY TO ESCAPE WHAT THEY CALLED THEIR WEEK-LONG "NIGHTMARE" IN SANTO DOMINGO. EVEN IN THEIR HURRIED DEPARTURE THEY WERE HOUNDED BY THE PRESS FOR EXPLANATIONS OF WHAT THEY WERE DOING HERE, WHO BROUGHT THEM, WHETHER IT WAS TRUE THEIR CONTRACT WITH THE GODR NETTED THEM \$13,000 AS REPORTED (AGAIN WITHOUT DENIALS), WHAT THEIR FINDINGS WERE, ETC. AN ENTERPRISING LISTIN REPORTER FOLLOWED THE PAIR ABOARD THEIR FLIGHT TO PUERTO RICO AND APPARENTLY BADGERED THEM ENOUGH ON THE TRIP TO GET THEIR EXPLANATION OF THEIR APPEARANCE HERE.

5. ALL THAT HAS BEEN PIECED TOGETHER ABOUT THE CHILEANS' SUDDEN APPEARANCE HERE TO HELP THE JCE STUDY THE REFORMISTA FRAUD CLAIMS IS THAT A CHILEAN LAWYER HERE, IDENTIFIED AS ONE CESAR ARANDEA, CALLED THEM IN CHILE AND PUT THEM IN TOUCH WITH THE DOMINICAN AMBASSADOR IN SANTIAGO, GEN (RET) NEY TEJEDA ALVAREZ. CONFIDENTIAL

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TEJEDA, GIADACH AND BORACK ADKNOWLEDGED, CONTRACTED THEM FOR THE JOB, BUT FROM THERE ON THE FACTS ARE OBSCURE, EXCEPT THAT THEY DID SPEND A WEEK AT THE JCE (INCLUDING THE PAST WEEKEND, THEY SAID), WORKING ON THE COMPUTERIZED LISTS. THEY WERE FORCED REPEATEDLY BY THE HYPER-ACTIVE SANTO DOMINGO TABLOIDS TO DENY THAT THEY WORKED FOR THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT; THEY STUCK TO THEIR STORY THEY WERE TECHNICIANS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTIAGO.

6. AT ANOTHER POINT, JCE PRESIDENT SUBERVI, HARRASSED BY INDIGNANT UNIVERSITY RECTORS AND COMPUTER EXPERTS IN THIS COUNTRY FOR EXPLANATIONS AS TO WHY HE DID NOT USE DOMINICAN TALENT, ALMELY EXPLAINED THAT INDEED HE HAD MADE "DISCRETE" INQUIRIES TO SEE IF ANYONE HERE WERE INTERESTED IN THE JOB, BUT HAD NO SUCCESS. HE THEREFORE TURNED TO THE GODR FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR HELP IN FINDING FOREIGN EXPERTS AND THE MINISTRY CAME UP WITH GIADACH AND BORACK. THAT EXPLANATION, UNFORTUANTELY, WAS MADE BEFORE THE DISTRACTED CHILEANS TOLD THEIR STORY ABOUT HAVING BEEN LINED UP FOR THE GODR CONTRACT BY THE MYSTERIOUS LAWYER, ARANEDA, WHO APPEARS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM SANTO DOMINGO AFTER BEING PURSUED FROM ONE HOTEL TO ANOTHER BY THE PRESS. THUS, THE PUBLIC DEMAND FOR A CREDIBLE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION REMAINS UNSATISFIED.

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7. IN THE MIDST OF THE FUROR OVER THE CHILEAN COMPUTER EXPERTS "WHO ARE GOING TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC," BURST THE "TELEFONAZO" OF MARINO (VINCHO) CASTILLO, THE REFORMISTA LAWYER WHO HAS BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF SPOKESMAN TRYING TO PROVE OPPOSITION FRAUD IN THE STRUGGLE AT THE JCE. DURING THE JCE HEARING ON JUNE 21, CASTILLO SUBMITTED AS "EVIDENCE" TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIMS A SUPPOSEDLY COMPROMISING PHONE TAP OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRD PRESIDENT, SALVADOR JORGE BLANCO, AND ANOTHER PRD FIGURE. LISTIN EDITORIALIZED THAT THE INTERCEPTED CONVERSATION, WHICH OCCURRED A WEEK AFTER THE ELECTION, DID NOTHING TO SUPPORT VINCHO'S CENTRAL CHARGE-- THAT THERE WAS COMPUTERIZED FRAUD BEFORE THE VOTING.

8. BUT VINCHO'S ACTION IN SUBMITTING AN ILLEGAL PHONE TAP AS EVIDENCE, WITHOUT EXPLAINING WHERE HE GOT IT, HAS KICKED UP A STORM. JORGE BLANCO, VICTIM OF WHAT HAS BEEN BAPTIZED TELEPHONIC ESPIONAGE AND VINCHO'S MAIN OPPONENT IN THE JCE "TRIAL," ACKNOWLEDGED THE CONVERSATION WAS AUTHENTIC. HE HAS SAID NOTHING MORE ABOUT IT SINCE, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY LETTING HIS ADVERSARY STEW IN THE JICE OF HIS
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OWN RASH ACT; CODETEL, THE LOCAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, QUICKLY ANNOUNCED IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE TAP; THE CHIEF OF POLICE, PRESSED AS TO HIS INTENTIONS TO INVESTIGATE THE CRIME (TAPS ARE ILLEGAL BOTH UNDER THE COMMUNICATIONS LAW AND THE CONSTITUTION), SAYS IT IS A MATTER FOR THE JCE TO LOOK INTO; LEGAL EXPERTS ARE CALLING FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST CASTILLO; AND VINCHO HIMSELF, HAVING DROPPED THE BOMBSHELL IN "COURT" IN THE MORNING, WENT ON GOVERNMENT TV THAT EVENING TO REVEAL THE CONTENTS OF THE TAP TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. AS THE REACTION TO THE "TELEFONAZO" BEGAN BLOWING UP, HOWEVER, VINCHO SAID NOTHING MORE AND HAS NOT EXPLAINED THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE TAP.

9. ALL OF THIS COMING ON TOP OF LAST WEEKEND'S BURGLARY OF VOTING DOCUMENTS AT JCE HEADQUARTERS, THE MUFFED ATTEMPT TO REWRITE AN OFFICIAL GAZETTE CHANGING THE ELECTORAL LAW, THE APPEARANCE OF THE CHILEAN COMPUTER EXPERTS, AND NOW THE PHONETAPPING AFFAIR, HAS DOMINICANS TALKING ABOUT THEIR OWN WATERGATE. A VARIATION IS "VINCHOGATE," BUT EVERYONE SEEMS TO AGREE THAT WHATEVER IT IS CALLED, THIS IS A VERY STRANGE BUSINESS.

10. SUCH DEVELOPMENTS, FOLLOWING THE REMOVAL OF THOSE IN THE JCE CONSIDERED STUMBLING BLOCKS TO THE REFORMISTA FRAUD CLAIMS, ARE PROLONGING THE COUNTRY'S UNEASINESS. THE QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARINGS OF THE JCE APPEAR TO HAVE WOUND UP WITH THE JUNE 22 SESSION AND THE BOARD IS SAID NOW TO BE CONSIDERING THE CHALLENGES EN BLOC. THE WAY IT WAS LEFT AT YESTERDAY'S HEARING, THE REFORMISTAS, WHO CLEARLY HAVE NOT RPT NOT "PROVED" FRAUD THAT WOULD JUSTIFY THE CALLING OF NEW ELECTIONS, HAVE SAID THE BURDEN OF PROOF IS ON THE JCE ITSELF TO PROVE THEIR CLAIMS; THE PRD ARGUED JUST THE OPPOSITE--THAT THE PLAINTIFFS MUST PROVE THEIR CASE, NOT THE COURT.

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11. IT MAY BE THAT VINCHO CASTILLO HAS SOMETHING UP HIS SLEEVE BEYOND INCONCLUSIVE PHONE TAPS OR HIS ESSENTIAL ARGUMENT THAT "PROOF" OF FRAUD WAS THE FAILURE OF 600,000 REGISTERED VOTERS TO GET TO THE POLLS. BUT IT IS ALSO BEING SUGGESTED THAT THE CLAMOR IN THE COUNTRY FOR AN END TO THE SUSPENSE MAY BE GETTING TO PRESIDENT BALAGUER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, NATIONAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTO03468
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780262-1060
Format: TEL
From: SANTO DOMINGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780625/aaaaavov.tel
Line Count: 217
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d774a182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2225549
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WATERGATE ON THE OZAMA
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, DR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d774a182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014